

Mardela Middle and High School and Salisbury University PDS Partnership

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ABSTRACT: Salisbury University (SU) has been preparing teachers since 1925 and has earned a stellar reputation in teacher preparation, especially through its work with PDS. In 2009, SU was honored with the NAPDS 'Spirit of Partnership' award for its contributions to the annual national conference. SU and Worcester County Public Schools earned the NAPDS 'Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement' award in 2011 for its exceptional buy-in by teachers and the strong linkage of intern involvement with student achievement. In 2015, SU received the NAPDS 'Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement' award once again, this time for its partnership with Mardela Middle and High School in Wicomico County, Maryland. Specifically noted were the high productivity and morale of the partnership and the permeating spirit of reciprocal support and development.

NAPDS Essentials Addressed: #1/A comprehensive mission that is broader in its outreach and scope than the mission of any partner and that furthers the education profession and its responsibility to advance equity within schools and, by potential extension, the broader community; #2/A school–university culture committed to the preparation of future educators that embraces their active engagement in the school community; #3/Ongoing and reciprocal professional development for all participants guided by need; #4/A shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by all participants; #5/Engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants; #6/An articulation agreement developed by the respective participants delineating the roles and responsibilities of all involved; #7/A structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration; #8/Work by college/university faculty and P-12 faculty in formal roles across institutional settings; #9/Dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures.

Introduction

Professional Development Schools (PDSs) have a unique opportunity to augment the quality of clinical practice for education preparation providers (EPPs) and P-12 partners. Exemplary school-university partnerships, coupled with high-quality practicum experiences, are consonant with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards (CAEP, 2015). The Mardela Middle and High School (MMHS) and Salisbury University (SU) PDS partnership provides a healthy learning organization for pre-service teacher preparation, reciprocal professional development and secondary student learning.

Mission and Vision

NAPDS Essential 1 states that the mission of the PDS partnership is broader than the mission of any one partner while advancing the education profession and equity within the school system. The mission of the MMHS/SU PDS partnership

is to provide exemplary pre-service teacher preparation, to unite a learning community that fosters the continuous professional development of practicing classroom teachers and SU faculty, and to work together to improve pedagogy and secondary student outcomes. Collaboration is the key underpinning of the partnership. The mission is congruent with NAPDS Essential 1. The leadership, management, operating systems, and culture within the relationship help provide consistent organizational health for all PDS stakeholders (Lencioni, 2012).

The MMHS/SU PDS partnership began in the spring of 2005. Mardela Middle and High School is a public secondary school located in Mardela Springs, Maryland. It is one of nine public secondary schools in Wicomico County. The Wicomico County Public Schools educate 14,500 students. MMHS is located 13.1 miles from Salisbury University and educates students in grades 6-12. The school is situated within western Wicomico County, a rural part of the county on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. MMHS employs a faculty of 65 teachers. 45 members of the MMHS faculty received their undergraduate or graduate degrees from Salisbury University. MMHS promotes

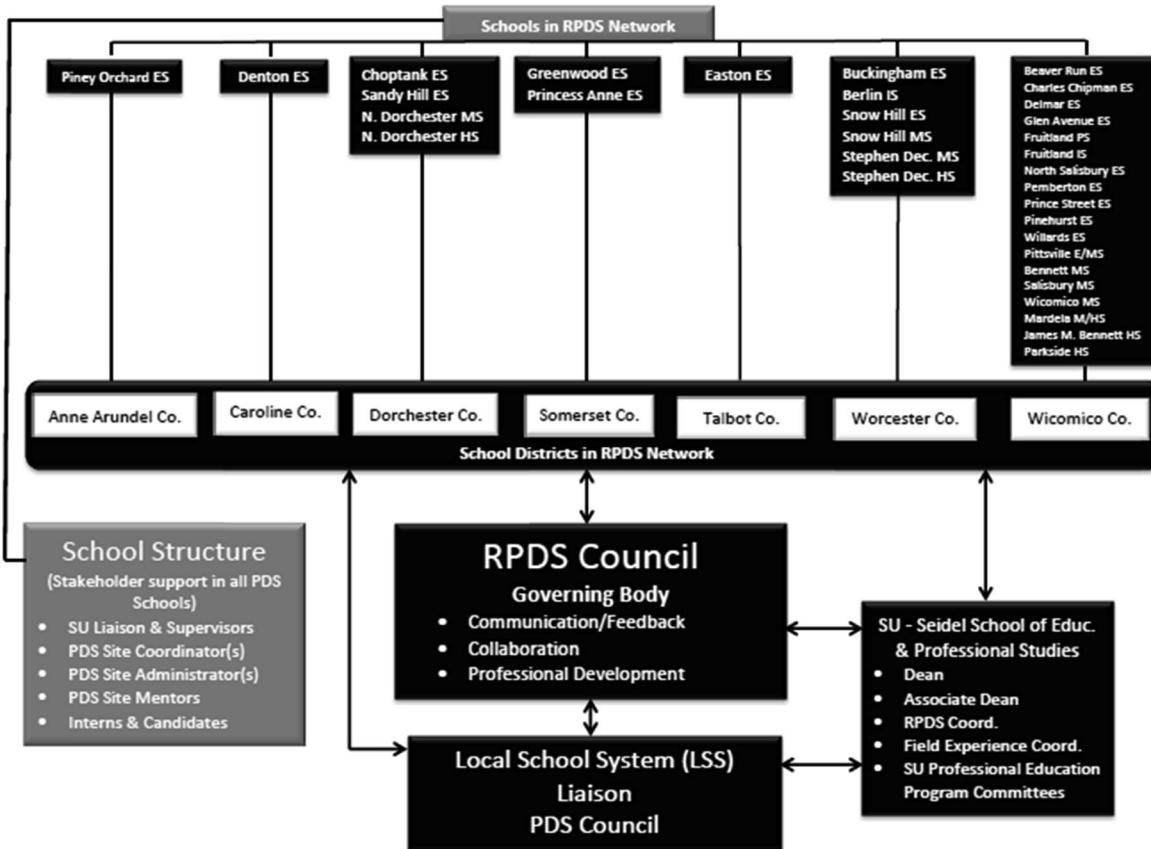


Figure 1. Salisbury University's (SU) Regional Professional Development Schools (RPDS) Network

three core principles for all students, which they refer to as “The Warrior Way”: (1) Be Ready; (2) Be Respectful; (3) Be Responsible. The mission of Mardela Middle and High School is to ensure a quality education in an effective and safe learning environment in which all students will reach their potential and honors a tradition of community support. During the 2014 academic year, MMHS students exceeded the target for the College and Career Readiness (CCR) indicator. This is a measure of the 5-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate and the College and Career Preparation (CCP). Students with a Maryland High School Diploma are counted successful for CCP when they have achieved at least one of the following: Earning a 3 or greater on an AP exam or 4 or greater on an IB exam; attaining advanced standing (enrolled in the third course of the program) in a State-approved CTE program; or has entered a postsecondary institution within 16 months of graduating from high school. MMHS was the only secondary school in Wicomico County to earn this distinction.

The vision of this PDS partnership foresees signature pedagogies (Shulman, 2005) cascading throughout both organizations, enabling pre-service teachers, beginning teachers, mentor teachers, and SU faculty an opportunity to advance equity and mitigate oppression. All partners view the vision as critical to the future of this collaborative partnership. This vision is more than just an effective and efficient utilization of human

and physical resources. A vision must ignite hearts and inflame thoughts (Straw, Scullard, Kukkonen, & Davis, 2013). All PDS partners are committed to accomplishing extraordinary outcomes by adding value to others within the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

In order to achieve exemplary results within organizations, participants must develop trusting and collaborative relationships. PDS partners work most efficiently when all stakeholders foster a climate of mutual interdependence. A spirit of reciprocal professional support and development permeates the MMHS/SU PDS partnership. A congruent PDS purpose is embedded within the goals and roles of MMHS/SU PDS leaders, mentors, pre-service teachers, liaisons, supervisors, faculty, staff, and administrators. Relationships have been forged on a collective sense of shared responsibility for the advancement of equity within the school. Because of strong PDS leadership, the partnership is a healthy organization with minimal confusion, high productivity and morale, and low turnover. The partnership consistently maximizes the knowledge, practical experience, and intellectual capital of its personnel.

Structure of the MMHS/SU Partnership

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) mandates that all pre-service teachers complete their internships

in Professional Development Schools. The University's PDS network spans seven counties and includes 33 partner schools (Figure 1).

As outlined in Essential 6, an articulation agreement between the University and partner counties identifies the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders. Salisbury University collaborates with each county in the network to compose and agree upon a Memorandum of Understanding. This document identifies University responsibilities, County responsibilities, and joint responsibilities, and is signed by the University Provost and Superintendent of Schools.

Essential 7 and 8 call for a collaborative structure and distinct roles to fulfill the mission of the partnership. The Regional Professional Development Schools (RPDS) Coordinator creates and maintains the RPDS network, working closely with all PDS stakeholders to ensure that the Maryland State Department of Education PDS standards are met. This individual designs and conducts needs-based professional development for PDS stakeholders, staffs PDS sites according to the Maryland PDS Standards, and conducts and chairs meetings throughout the school year with the Regional PDS Council and Local School System (LSS) PDS Liaison Council. The Regional PDS Coordinator also maintains documentation of PDS artifacts and data demonstrating that PDS sites are meeting the Maryland PDS and CAEP Standards. This person represents the University's PDS program at the local, state, and national level.

The Field Experience Coordinator works with PDS site principals and site coordinators to secure quality placements for 800 pre-service teachers each semester. This individual tailors each field experience for pre-service teachers in pre-program and professional methods courses based on their course needs. The Coordinator also takes into account the pre-service teachers' professional interests and district preferences.

The PDS liaison acts as the main contact between the University and the PDS site. This individual is involved in implementing pre-service teacher orientation and exit conferences, collecting artifacts for accreditation purposes, planning and delivering professional development, and serving on the school's instructional leadership team and coordinating council. In this unique circumstance, the PDS liaison to Mardela Middle and High School taught for sixteen years at the school before joining the faculty at the University. The relationships that he fostered while a member of the MMHS staff enhanced and reinforced clarity within the PDS learning organization. The PDS partners believe that there is no such thing as too much communication (Lencioni, 2012). The liaison to MMHS conducts a needs assessment each fall, and consistently facilitates professional development opportunities for the school faculty.

The PDS site coordinator is the point person on the faculty of the PDS site. This person facilitates field placements, supports pre-service teachers at the PDS site, and works closely with the liaison to further PDS and school initiatives. He/she often serves as a mentor teacher. At MMHS, the site coordinator and PDS liaison have presented together several times at the PDS national

conference and act as senior editors of the organization's magazine: PDS Partners.

The PDS administrator is an advocate for the program; promoting a PDS culture of collaboration within the school and community. The current principal of MMHS is a member of the inaugural cohort of Salisbury University's Ed.D. program, and displays a sincere commitment to the nine essentials of the NAPDS. When the MMHS principal was asked to describe the current state of the MMHS/SU PDS partnership, he explained: "The staff and students of Mardela Middle and High School continue to benefit from our ongoing partnership with SU. We are able to provide our students on a day-to-day basis with more individualized learning opportunities. Our faculty and staff benefit through reciprocal professional development and the opportunity to work side-by-side with promising future teachers. Our PDS relationship is a true 'win-win' collaborative endeavor."

The mentor teacher works with the University to support pre-service teachers in their foundations courses, methods classes, and internship experiences. Mentors who collaborate with Salisbury University pre-service teachers have the opportunity to complete a professional development (PD) workshop in mentor training in the University's co-teaching model. Mentors who complete the PD are identified as "clinical mentors" and receive an added stipend to their contract each time they agree to work with a full-time pre-service teacher. Currently, 1010 teachers have completed the workshop; 16 of them teaching at MMHS.

Administrators, site coordinators, University liaisons, and SU faculty and administration come together to form the RPDS Council. The council meets throughout the year to share data and insight from the field in order to make positive adjustments to the University's PDS program and practices, which ultimately leads to P-12 student achievement. The RPDS Council provides PDS stakeholders with a voice in decisions related to the professional preparation of pre-service teachers. The RPDS Coordinator and Dean also meet with PDS representatives from each of the seven partner school districts, forming the Local School System Liaison PDS Council. This group meets each semester to clarify the mission of the PDS partnership and works to ensure that reciprocity is achieved.

Organizational Climate and Culture

According to Lencioni (2012), organizational health is the strongest variable that impacts a partnership's growth and achievement. Sadly, many leaders choose to ignore it within their organizations. The MMHS/SU PDS partnership is very intentional about fostering a climate and culture that is congruent with healthy organizational goals.

NAPDS Essential 2 advocates for a culture deeply committed to the preparation of pre-service teachers. SU works closely with MMHS to design enriched environments and extensive secondary internships. Accordingly, the integration of SU's educator preparation programs and MMHS 6-12 curricula provide a robust PDS learning organization. The state of Maryland requires all pre-service teachers to engage in an

Figure 2. The MMHS/SU 100-day Extensive Internship

Internship Year	Semester	Sequence
Senior Year	Fall	1 day/week classroom/school placement; 16 days
Senior Year	Spring	1st Experience - 8 weeks, Full-time internship; 40 days
Senior Year	Spring	2nd Experience - 8 weeks, Full-time internship; 40 days

When the school calendar does not fulfill the day requirements for interns due to spring break or other out of school days, interns meet the 100-day requirement by adding additional internship days during August, January or May of the senior year.

extensive 100-day internship practicum. SU's EPP identifies pre-service teachers as interns during the internship practicum. Prior to the 100-day extensive internship, a semester of one-half day per week placements occur. The secondary MMHS/SU interns return to MMHS following the one-half day semester of field placements during the 100-day internship practicum.

Secondary interns spend three semesters in the same classroom - one at the middle school level and one at the high school level. The placements alternate; for example, if a secondary intern begins in a middle school classroom during the spring semester of methods classes in the junior year, the intern will begin the first semester of the 100-day internship in a high school classroom. At the beginning of the full-time internship in the spring of the senior year, the intern remains in the same high school classroom for the first eight weeks. The intern then returns to the same middle school classroom to complete the second eight weeks of the internship semester (Figure 2).

The partnership offers myriad opportunities for interns to join together with parents, guardians, faculty, and staff of the MMHS community. In August, interns participate in the annual "Back to School" barbecue. MMHS faculty and interns work collaboratively to present a Maryland assessment night for parents and guardians of middle and high school families. This helps to mitigate assessment anxiety while providing interns the opportunity to meet families early in the internship. Each MMHS/SU intern authors articles for the school newspaper, *Mardela Matters*. Interns connect with the broader community through the publication while articulating their ongoing action research projects and salient learnings during the semester. During the spring semester, the site coordinator's intern participates as a member of the instructional leadership team (ILT). The active engagement of interns in the school community at MMHS is more than just a concept; it is a way of life. The last five years of student internship cohorts represent a variety of academic disciplines (Figure 3).

NAPDS Essential 3 states that professional development will be reciprocal for members of the partnership. During the beginning of the academic year, a needs assessment is distributed to faculty and staff at MMHS by the liaison to ascertain their professional development needs. The partnership has found that a true community of learners is established and nourished by this process. Recently, the ILT determined a need for MMHS faculty and pre-service teachers to participate in PD relating to achievement gap closure and research-based pedagogical techniques. The SU liaison provided a full semester of PD based on the pedagogical techniques articulated by Doug Lemov (2012). The PD utilized the SU course management system, coupled with active learning activities facilitated by the SU liaison. MMHS faculty and SU pre-service teachers' efficacious beliefs were assessed to determine the impact of the PD. On average, MMHS faculty and SU pre-service teachers experienced significantly greater levels of overall efficacy after participation in the PD ($M=91.4$, $SE=9.17$), than prior to participation in the PD ($M=82.7$, $SE=58.23$, $t(18)=2.99$, $p<.05$, $r=.45$). On average, MMHS faculty and SU pre-service teachers experienced significantly greater levels of efficacy in student engagement after participation in the PD ($M=28.1$, $SE=4.58$), than prior to participation in the PD ($M=23.2$, $SE=3.04$, $t(18)=2.88$, $p<.05$, $r=.78$). On average, MMHS faculty and SU pre-service teachers experienced significantly greater levels of efficacy in instructional strategies after participation in the PD ($M=31.7$, $SE=2.90$), than prior to participation in the PD ($M=30.1$, $SE=2.42$, $t(18)=2.85$, $p<.05$, $r=.79$). Focus groups revealed the following comments from MMHS faculty and SU pre-service teachers:

- *This was the most successful PD ever. I felt affirmation and it forced me to think.*
- *It helped me with my techniques and the choices provided were refreshing. It strengthened and reaffirmed my teaching.*
- *It was a rich learning experience. I learned from others and I loved reading their posts. I physically and mentally saw the changes in my students from the changes in my teaching.*

Figure 3. Mardela Middle and High School Intern Cohort Placements

Academic Year	Number of Interns	Academic Disciplines
2014-2015	11	3 English, 1 French, 5 History, 1 Math, 1 Spanish
2013-2014	9	1 Biology, 1 English, 5 History, 1 Math, 1 Music
2012-2013	13	3 History, 3 Health, 2 Biology, 2 English, 2 Math, 1 PE
2011-2012	12	3 History, 4 Math, 2 PE, 3 English
2010-2011	9	2 Middle School Science, 1 Health, 4 History, 2 Math

- This was the first PD that truly worked. I loved the hands-on learning and the ability to choose and work at my own pace.

The PD was further enhanced by the willingness of the principal to provide coverage for faculty as they observed their peers in the classroom. The principal offered to cover classes himself. Actively engaged learners in a committed community are consistent with NAPDS Essential 3.

NAPDS Essential 4 advocates for a mutual commitment to innovative and reflective practice. In January of 2015, the SU liaison hosted and facilitated the 3rd annual Mentor/Intern Forum at Salisbury University. The Forum provided all MMHS mentors and SU pre-service teachers a PD opportunity prior to the spring internship. Modeled after research conducted by Heck, Bacharach, Dahlberg, Ofstedal, Mann, Wellik, and Dank (2010) at St. Cloud State University, the Forum solidified a foundation in collaboration, interpersonal relationships, value congruency, and pedagogical professional development. The MMHS principal also attended and participated in the Forum. The intent of all MMHS/SU PD is to help augment the strength of the community of learners within the partnership for the benefit of middle and high school students at MMHS. The learning environment of the Forum provided a vision beyond the MMHS/SU partnership. The success of this Forum has resulted in the offering for other PDS sites within the SU network. Each of the aforementioned PD activities showcases a shared commitment to innovative and reflective practice by the MMHS/SU partners. The partnership consistently honors and respects the “wisdom of practice” (Shulman, 2004) of 6-12 faculty and staff at MMHS.

RPDS Dissemination and Celebrations

NAPDS Essential 5 calls for engagement in and public sharing of the results of deliberate investigations of practice by respective participants. The PDS partnership has a strong commitment to the engagement and public dissemination of exemplary PDS practices. All stakeholders, including the PDS liaison, site coordinator, administrator, SU faculty and administrators, mentor teachers, and pre-service teachers consistently share their research and investigations of practice via PDS conference presentations. Since 2010, individuals representing the MMHS/SU partnership have created and shared 15 regional, 21 state & 20 national PDS conference presentations. PDS partners have also shared research and PDS exemplary practices through *PDS Partners & School-University Partnerships*, intra-school presentations (faculty meetings, school newspaper, back-to-school nights, intern orientations and exit conferences), written reports (Maryland State Department of Education/National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education Explication Paper), and parent organizations (Parent Teacher Association).

MMHS/SU pre-service teachers conduct action research on the impact of 6-12 student learning during their internship experience. The pre-service teachers share their deliberate

investigations of practice within the school site via team or school-wide faculty meetings. Several MMHS pre-service teachers have also shared their action research at state and national PDS conference poster sessions.

As Essential 9 suggests, there should be dedicated and shared resources and formal rewards and recognition structures within the PDS partnership. While the Professional Development Schools framework is a mandated system in the state of Maryland, there is not an allocated budget for its implementation. However, the MMHS/SU partnership is rich in human resources. Each stakeholder gives their time and expertise to enhance the PDS program. In addition to serving on MMHS's ILT, the PDS liaison is an active member of the leadership association of NAPDS, and has served as a PDS grant reviewer for “Race to the Top” funding initiatives. MMHS's PDS site coordinator promotes and supports the PDS partnership in a role that does not include a stipend.

The culture of collaboration between the school and the University is well established. The MMHS principal has hired SU pre-service teachers as full-time, first-year teachers after graduation. Salisbury University also shares its physical resources with MMHS. It opens its doors to allow the middle/high school to hold off-campus meetings and professional development opportunities at the University.

Each year, all PDS stakeholders including pre-service teachers, mentors, internship supervisors, liaisons, site coordinators, administrators, central office personnel, and SU faculty and administrators gather to recognize outstanding work in the PDS program at SU during the annual RPDS Celebration. MMHS has been honored for its contribution to the RPDS network ten times in the last ten years. Mentor teachers, pre-service teachers, the site coordinator, supervisor, liaison, and school itself have received awards (Figure 4).

In 2013, MMHS was chosen out of 33 schools by the MSDE as one of two PDS site visit locations for NCATE/MSDE accreditation review. Salisbury University earned “target” in the field experience area of the review due to thorough evidence provided in MMHS's explication paper. The dedication of the SU liaison, RPDS coordinator, site coordinator, principal, and entire staff of MMHS in preparation for this site visit shined a light on the comprehensive mission, school-university culture, and strength of roles within the PDS.

A few of the strengths identified within the MMHS/SU partnership that were noted in the final accreditation report include: action research is developed by school and University-based faculty and pre-service teachers, research findings at MMHS led to the creation of after school programs to enhance 6-12 student achievement, and pre-service teachers volunteer in those programs. Salisbury University's PDS co-teaching model is supported and practiced at MMHS. Assessment and co-planning practices allow mentors and pre-service teachers to collaborate throughout the internship experience. Survey results regarding PDS-planned and provided professional development fostered PDS program and school improvement. The strengths cited in the report demonstrate MMHS/SU partnership's ongoing

Figure 4. Regional PDS Award Recipients from Mardela Middle and High School

PDS Partner	Role	Award	Year
Linda Nestor	Mentor Teacher	Outstanding Mentor Teacher Award	2005
Amy Baer	Mentor Teacher	Outstanding Mentor Teacher Award	2006
Jeff Baer	Mentor Teacher	Outstanding Mentor Teacher Award	2007
Ron Wainwright	Mentor Teacher	Outstanding Mentor Teacher Award	2008
Ron Siers	SU PDS Liaison/Supervisor	Outstanding PDS Liaison Award	2011
Nancy Guillemart & Erica Mayhew	Mentor Teacher & SU Intern	Outstanding Co-Teaching Award	2012
Nancy Guillemart	Mentor Teacher	Outstanding Mentor Teacher Award	2012
Cathy Ramey	Site Coordinator	Outstanding Site Coordinator Award	2012
Ron Siers	SU PDS Liaison/ Supervisor	Outstanding PDS Supervisor Award	2012
Mardela Middle & High School	NCATE/MSDE Review Site	Outstanding Service to PDS	2014

professional development and commitment to innovative and reflective practice.

Conclusion

The MMHS/SU partnership is a great source of pride within the RPDS network. The MMHS/SU partnership encapsulates the mission and goals of the NAPDS Nine Essentials by enhancing the educational community through its collaboration and innovation by dedicated, reflective stakeholders. Fostering professional development for practicing classroom teachers and SU faculty, along with providing exemplary pre-service teacher preparation to enhance 6-12 student learning are the essentials of the partnership. The organizational health of the MMHS/SU PDS will continue to grow as all stakeholders carry the mission and vision of the partnership into the future. ^{SUP}

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